

NATIONAL HOME FRONT PROJECT
Newark Public Library
Finding Aid

In spring 2018, Newark Public Library (NY) served as a pilot partner for the National Home Front Project. The Library's mission is to provide equal access to information and knowledge so that people of all ages may seek education, social and cultural growth. For this community partnership, librarian Celeste Schantz Kovachi conducted home front oral histories with residents of Western New York State in Newark and Rochester.

The Newark Public Library encourages the free flow of ideas so that citizens may make informed choices about their personal lives, activities, and government. By means of collection and organization of materials, and programs of interest, the Newark Public Library seeks to educate, inform, enrich and entertain the citizens of the Newark Community. The Library serves all people without regard for age, sex, religious or ethnic background, political affiliation, educational ability or economic status.

For more information about Newark Public Library's World War II interview collection, please contact Celeste Schantz Kovachi at cschantz@newarklibrary.org.

Project Coordinator: Celeste Schantz Kovachi, Librarian, Newark Public Library, cschantz@newarklibrary.org

Website Partner Page: <https://nationalhomefrontproject.org/newark-public-library>

SoundCloud Playlist: <https://soundcloud.com/nationalhomefrontproject/sets/newark-public-library>

Collection Summary:

- Amann, Rev. William "Father Bill" (2 sessions)
- Hughes, Owen
- Kovachi, Joan Rosenberg
- Martin, Rafe
- Martin, Rose
- Pelletier, Nancy
- Riedman-Dangler, Virginia "Ginny"
- Rynearson, Mona
- Schinsing, Robert
- Wiedrick, Jane

Quantity:

- Sessions: 11
- Narrators: 10
- Artifact Images: 42
- Audio Length: 6:43:57

WILLIAM AMANN

Interviewee: Rev. William “Father Bill” Amann

Interviewer: Celeste Schantz Kovachi

Archival Processor: Katy Shenk

Copyeditor: Erica Fugger

Date: April 23, 2018

Location: Penfield, New York

Session Number: 1

Interview Contributor: Newark Public Library

Project: National Home Front Project

Accession Number: AmannWilliam_HFN-OH_042318

ABSTRACT

Biography

Rev. William “Father Bill” Amann was born in 1928 and experienced the war as a teenager living in Rochester, New York, where he worked for the Eastman Kodak Company during the summer. He later attended seminary, also in Rochester. Father Bill has been a priest for sixty-five years and currently works part-time at St. Joseph’s Church in Penfield, New York.

Summary

In this interview, Father Bill shares his encounter with a crew of German POW’s shoveling snow in Rochester. He also recalls hearing about the war from his brother-in-law in the service and visiting family in Austria after the war.

Keywords

teenager, Rochester, New York, Kodak, priest, German prisoners of war, Cobb's Hill, Axis Sally, radio, rationing

WILLIAM AMANN

Interviewee: Rev. William “Father Bill” Amann

Interviewer: None

Archival Processor: Katy Shenk

Copyeditor: Erica Fugger

Date: May 14, 2018

Location: Penfield, New York

Session Number: 2

Interview Contributor: Newark Public Library

Project: National Home Front Project

Accession Number: AmannWilliam_HFN-OH_051418

ABSTRACT

Biography

William Amann was born in 1928 and experienced the war as a teenager living in Rochester, New York, where he worked for the Eastman Kodak Company during the summer. He later attended seminary, also in Rochester. Father Bill has been a priest for sixty-five years and currently works part-time at St. Joseph’s Church in Penfield, New York.

Summary

In this short follow up session, Father Bill recalls listening to the trial of Axis Sally on the radio.

Keywords

teenager, Rochester, New York, Kodak, priest, German prisoners of war, Cobb's Hill, Axis Sally, radio, rationing

OWEN HUGHES

Interviewee: Owen Hughes
Interviewer: Celeste Schantz Kovachi
Archival Processor: Katy Shenk
Copyeditor: Erica Fugger
Date: June 12, 2018
Location: Newark, New York
Session Number: 1
Interview Contributor: Newark Public Library
Project: National Home Front Project
Accession Number: HughesOwen_HFN-OH_061218

ABSTRACT

Biography

Owen Hughes was born in Freemont, Ohio, in 1919. After high school, he worked as a commercial sign painter and trained in hand lettering techniques. In anticipation of the draft, Owen joined the Army Air Force with hopes of becoming a flyer. After arriving for training in aerial photography in Patterson Field, Ohio, he was deployed overseas to England.

Owen was stationed at Burtonwood Airfield and later went on to Paris, where he worked and lived in the airplanes beneath the Eiffel Tower. In his later years, he designed the nose art for *Doc*, one of only two B-29 bomber planes still flying today. Owen continues to attend air shows throughout the country.

Summary

In this interview, Owen recalls witnessing air raids while stationed at air fields in England, experiencing Paris nightlife, and working on designs for *Glacier Girl* and *Doc*. He also speaks about his work with various mediums of art, including hand lettering, nose art, jacket designs, and photography during World War II.

Keywords

Army Air Force, Patterson Field, England, Pointon Park, air raids, Paris, nose art, Glacier Girl, Doc, photography

JOAN ROSENBERG KOVACHI

Interviewee: Joan Rosenberg Kovachi

Interviewer: Celeste Schantz Kovachi

Archival Processor: Katy Shenk

Copyeditor: Erica Fugger

Date: May 3, 2018

Location: Ontario, New York

Session Number: 1

Interview Contributor: Newark Public Library

Project: National Home Front Project

Accession Number: KovachiJoanRosenberg_HFN-OH_050318

ABSTRACT

Biography

Joan Rosenberg Kovachi was a child during the outbreak of World War II. She grew up with her twin sister and parents in Buffalo, New York, and her father worked for the Merchant Marines as an engineer.

Summary

In this oral history, Joan remembers hearing President Franklin D. Roosevelt's announcement of American entry into the war on the radio. She also recalls memories of her father's work as a Merchant Marine on the Great Lakes during World War II. Joan further remembers her aunts enjoying their factory work, but being forced to relinquish their jobs when the men returned from war.

Keywords

child, New York, Great Lakes, rationing, air raids, Merchant Marines, uniform, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, women, factories

RAFE MARTIN

Interviewee: Rafe Martin
Interviewer: Celeste Schantz Kovachi
Archival Processor: Katy Shenk
Copyeditor: Erica Fugger
Date: May 21, 2018
Location: Rochester, New York
Session Number: 1
Interview Contributor: Newark Public Library
Project: National Home Front Project
Accession Number: RafeMartin_HFN-OH_052118

ABSTRACT

Biography

Rafe Martin is an author and internationally acclaimed storyteller. His father, Arthur P. Martin, was a navigator who flew search and rescue missions over “The Hump”—a nickname for the Himalayan mountains—as part of “Blackie’s Gang” during World War II. Rafe currently lives in Rochester, New York, and is a lay teacher of Zen Buddhism.

Summary

In this interview, Rafe recounts memories of his father and his role in Blackie’s Gang during the war. He connects hearing his father’s stories about the war and interacting with Asian cultures to his own experiences with storytelling and his decision to live by the principles of Buddhism.

Keywords

child, father, Blackie’s Gang, John Porter, Army Air Force, Himalayas, Nāgas, Everglades, Zen Buddhism, storytelling

ROSE MARTIN

Interviewee: Rose Martin
Interviewer: Celeste Schantz Kovachi
Archival Processor: Jillian Curran
Copyeditor: Mari Mullane and Cameron Vanderscoff
Date: June 25, 2018
Location: Rochester, New York
Session Number: 1
Project: National Home Front Project
Interview Contributor: Newark Public Library
Accession Number: MartinRose-HFN-OH_062518

ABSTRACT

Biography

Rose Martin was born in Italy in 1946 and immigrated to the United States with her family in 1949. After the Germany invasion of Poland during World War II, her father deserted from the Polish Army to Hungary. Her mother's family was Yugoslavian Jewish and fled to Kosovo on falsified documents in 1941. They were initially imprisoned by Italian forces and were eventually relocated to Albania, where they were cared for by local Muslim families. Her parents met in a prison camp and Rose subsequently grew up in a displaced persons camp, where she learned three different languages. After arriving in Italy at the conclusion of the war, her family then immigrated to New York City.

Summary

In this oral history, Rose Martin tells the story of her parents, who met in a World War II prison camp and later married. She recounts their experiences during the war and her own memories of growing up as a refugee. Rose further discusses transitioning to life in the Bronx in the 1950s, and her later visits to both Israel and Italy. She also reflects on immigration identities, the Holocaust, and Jewish traditions that were passed down through the generations.

Keywords

immigrant, prisoner of war, displaced persons camp, Holocaust, Santa Maria di Leuca, Poland, Italy, Albania, Jewish, New York

NANCY PELLETIER

Interviewee: Nancy Pelletier
Interviewer: Celeste Schantz Kovachi
Archival Processor: Jillian Curran
Copyeditors: Mari Mullane and Cameron Vanderscoff
Date: May 17, 2018
Location: Pennfield, New York
Session Number: 1
Project: National Home Front Project
Interview Contributor: Newark Public Library
Accession Number: PelletierNancy_HFN-OH_051718

ABSTRACT

Biography

Nancy Pelletier was born in 1930 in Syracuse, New York, where she spent the duration of World War II. Her father left his job as a traveling salesman to support wartime production, while her mother served as an air raid warden and her aunt worked at the L.C. Smith & Bros. Typewriter Company as part of the war effort. Nancy enjoyed summers at her family's house on Lake Ontario, and went on to be the first female student in her graduating class to receive a driver's license after the war and gas rationing concluded.

Summary

In this interview, Nancy provides an overview about how her childhood and schooling were affected by World War II. She shares memories of her family's Victory Garden and the potatoes they would eat with every meal. Nancy further recounts listening to the news on the radio, collecting stamps, and saving for war bonds. She also tells stories about the women she knew who worked outside of the home during the war, and the friends and classmates who enlisted in the military.

Keywords

Syracuse, New York, rationing, radio, fireside chats, air raid drills, Pearl Harbor, war bonds, Japanese, Victory Gardens

VIRGINIA REIDMAN-DANGLER

Interviewee: Virginia “Ginny” Riedman-Dangler
Interviewer: Celeste Schantz Kovachi
Archival Processor: Katy Shenk
Copyeditor: Erica Fugger
Date: June 14, 2018
Location: Pittsford, New York
Session Number: 1
Interview Contributor: Newark Public Library
Project: National Home Front Project
Accession Number: Riedman-DanglerVirginia_HFN-OH_061418

ABSTRACT

Biography

Virginia “Ginny” Riedman-Dangler is the daughter of Paul and Mary Kay Klee Dangler. Both of her parents were raised in Rochester, New York, during the Great Depression. Ginny’s mother, Mary Kay Klee, was born in 1927. Mary Kay attended Sacred Heart Academy and Nazareth College with the goal of becoming a writer. She was later denied employment due to gender discrimination and subsequently became a secretary. Mary Kay went on to document her experiences during World War II through a number of published short stories and poems.

Summary

In this interview, Ginny discusses her participation in a book project called *Before They Were Our Mothers: Voices of Women Born Before Rosie Started Riveting*, to which she submitted a story entitled, “And the Cardinal Sang,” written in her mother’s voice. Ginny further describes her mother’s experiences with growing up in Rochester during the war and her aspirations to become a professional writer.

Keywords

mother, Rochester, Great Depression, Sacred Heart Academy, Nazareth College, writer, short stories, poems, newspaper, secretary

MONA RYNEARSON

Interviewee: Mona Rynearson

Interviewer: Celeste Schantz Kovachi

Archival Processors: Michael Hershey, Jillian Curran, and Mairin Corasaniti

Copyeditor: Erica Fugger

Date: August 8, 2018

Location: Arcadia, New York

Session Number: 1

Project: National Home Front Project

Interview Contributor: Newark Public Library

Accession Number: RynearsonMona_HFN-OH_080818

ABSTRACT

Biography

Mona Rynearson was born in 1927 in Danielson, Connecticut. Her family moved to Niagara Falls, New York, in the 1940s. Rona's brother, Donald, was the only family member to serve in World War II, but the war pervaded nearly all other aspects of her life. She worked at an ice cream factory during the war with her mother to replace ice cream makers that had been drafted. Mona now lives in Arcadia, New York.

Summary

In this interview, Mona recalls living in upstate New York during World War II. She describes how she and her mother worked for an ice cream manufacturer during the war that traditionally employed men. Mona further recalls how her childhood was affected gasoline, coal, and food rationing.

Keywords

Niagara, New York, rationing, high school, radio, war stamps, Wendt Ice Cream Factory, Pearl Harbor, newsreels

ROBERT SCHINSING

Interviewee: Robert Schinsing
Interviewer: Celeste Schantz Kovachi
Archival Processors: Michael Hershey and Jillian Curran
Copyeditor: Erica Fugger
Date: June 13, 2018
Location: Newark, New York
Session Number: 1
Project: National Home Front Project
Interview Contributor: Newark Public Library
Accession Number: SchinsingRobert_HFN-OH_061318

ABSTRACT

Biography

Robert Schinsing was born near Rochester, New York, and had six siblings. Robert's father had served in the U.S. Navy during World War I and his brother enlisted in the Army during World War II. His mother was an air controller during the war and kept her eyes peeled for enemy planes on the East Coast. Robert joined the Air Force after high school and went on to fight in the Korean War.

Summary

In this oral history, Robert recalls wartime air raid drills and rationing. He discusses family life, school, and the impact of the war on his community. Robert further reflects on wartime celebrities, and visiting both Japan and Pearl Harbor years after World War II ended.

Keywords

Rochester, New York, air controller, air raid drills, rationing, radio, German prisoners of war, V-J Day, Japan, Pearl Harbor

JANE WEIDRICK

Interviewee: Jane Weidrick
Interviewer: Celeste Schantz Kovachi
Archival Processor: Katy Shenk
Copyeditor: Mari Mullane and Cameron Vanderscoff
Date: May 14, 2018
Location: Rochester, New York
Session Number: 1
Project: National Home Front Project
Interview Contributor: Newark Public Library
Accession Number: WeidrickJane_HFN-OH_051418

ABSTRACT

Biography

Jane Weidrick was born in Canandaigua, New York, in 1924 as the youngest of three children. After high school, Jane was hired by Rochester Products and attended the General Motors Institute in Flint, Michigan. She trained there to be a draftsman and designed tools to make engine parts for the war effort.

Summary

In this oral history, Jane recalls growing up in Canandaigua with her mother, brothers, and father, the latter of whom was the chief of police in Canandaigua. Jane further speaks about her time at the General Motors Institute and her work as a draftsman.

Keywords

Canandaigua, New York, Victory Gardens, General Motors Institute, Flint, Michigan, Rochester Products, draftsman, letters, police